

REMARKS

Affirmation of the election without traverse to prosecute original claims 1-22 is affirmed. Claims 23-29 are canceled.

The objections and rejections set forth by the Examiner in the office Action have been addressed by amending the two independent claims 1 and 12, and further by canceling claims 10 and 21. Support for the amendments appears in the specification and drawings.

To address the Section 112 issues, claim 1 has been amended to reflect that the band is formed by multiple plies that are co-planar and co-extensive in lateral and longitudinal directions, the plies being formed of a plurality of individual paper strips and bonded internally within the band itself. Claim 1 has also been amended to expressly state that the band has ends and that it is the ends of the band that are bonded together when the external adhesive is reactivated. Likewise, claim 12 has been amended such that the band is formed of paper strips (plural) with at least one strip being folded longitudinally to form multiple longitudinal plies, and wherein the plies are co-extensive laterally and longitudinally. As with claim 1, it is now also made clear that the ends of the band are adhered to each other by reactivating the external adhesive layer.

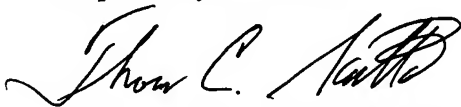
As to the Section 102 and 103 rejections based on the Peacock reference, it is submitted that the Peacock reference does not disclose the use of plural paper strips to form the plies. The language pointed out by the Examiner in paragraph 0025 does not disclose separate strips as claimed in the application at hand, since the methodology and equipment disclosed in Peacock would not function with separate webs - they would have to be joined by slight overlapping to create in effect a single web, or more likely, would be a two-layer web so as to add strength to

the final product. Thus, the disclosure of Peacock on this point is not enabling in sufficient degree to be used as a basis for rejecting the claims.

In addition to the patentability of the independent claims, particular attention is drawn to the embodiments of the invention set forth in claims 6, 7, 17, 18, and new claims 29-33. It is submitted that this claimed structure is not anticipated nor made obvious by any of the prior art either alone or in combination. These claims require structures as shown in Figures 1 and 2 of the application.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims as now presented are patentable, on the basis of the above remarks, and reconsideration and subsequent passage for allowance is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas C. Saitta", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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